(c) to (e) No, Sir. Public Sector Undertaking have not acquired any sick sugar mills in the State of Andhra Pradesh. However a preliminary study for possibility of putting up Ethanol plant at two sugar units running under cooperative sector in the district of Visakhapatnam is being carried out by HPCL.

Rise in crude prices

3816. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of crude petroleum in the international market have risen over US$ 100 per barrel in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details of the average prices prevailed during the last six months, month-wise;

(c) the details of oil purchased during the last six months indicating volume and price in terms of barrel, PSU Oil Company-wise;

(d) the details of Customs Duty and Counter Vailing Duty (CVD) attracted on these purchases; and

(e) the steps taken, if any, to insulate purchases of oil from volatile international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The price of Indian basket of crude oil has risen over US$ 100 per barrel recently. Indian basket of crude oil touched an all-time high of $ 109.30/bbl on 21.04.2008. The average price of Indian basket of crude oil for the current year 2008-09 *i.e.* upto 21st April 2008 is $ 103.44/bbl. The month-wise average prices of Indian Basket of Crude Oil from October, 2007 to April, 2008 (upto 21.4.08) is tabulated below:

	$/bbl
Oct'07	79.33
Nov'07	89.11
Dec'07	87.92
Jan'08	89.52
Feb'08	92.37
Mar'08	99.76
Apr'08 (upto 21.4.08)	103.44

NOTE: The composition of Indian Basket of crude represents average of Oman and Dubai for Sour Grades and Brent (Dated) for Sweet Grade in the ratio of 61.4 : 38.6.

(c) and (d) The details of volume and price in terms of barrels of crude oil imported, Customs Duty and Counter Vailing Duty paid by the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPC) during the last six months *i.e.* from October, 2007 to March, 2008 are given below:

Name of the Company	Quantity (Million Barrels)	Price ($/barrel) (weighted average)	Customs Duty paid (Rs. crore)	Counter Vailing Duty (Rs. crore)
IOB	166.592	88.66	3,180.08	Nil
BPC	51.103	88.79	913.68	Nil
HPC	49.166	89.06	632.57	Nil

(e) The Government has taken various measures to reduce oil imports and to increase the domestic production of oil, which are as follows:

(i) Carving out more and more areas for exploration for offer under various rounds of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).

(ii) Quicker development of discovered reserves for enabling commencement of production.

(iii) Use of stimulation techniques for increasing production from existing fields.

(iv) Application of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) techniques for increasing recovery factor from existing fields.

(v) Arresting decline from ageing fields.

(vi) Acquisition of exploration acreages and oil producing properties overseas to bring in equity oil.

(vii) Substitution of oil in the transport sector through use of alternative fuels such as Bio-diesel, ethanol, blended-petrol etc.

(viii) Diversification of the sources for procurement of crude. The Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are now importing crude oil from about 25 countries either on term contract or through spot purchase.

(ix) Construction of a Strategic Storage of crude oil of 5 MMT capacity at three locations *viz.* Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur for meeting unforeseen situations arising out of short term supply disruptions etc.

Reservation for SCs/STs and OBCs in ONGC

3817. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:

(a) the policy of reservation for SCs/STs and OBCs at the time of recruitment of employees and officers in the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC);

(b) the details of quota at all India level and regional level for reserved category; and

(c) whether there is reservation for SCs/STs and OBCs at the time of promotions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) The instructions & guidelines issued by Government of India from time to time for the reservation for SCs/STs & OBCs in direct recruitment are followed in ONGC.

The reservation percentage for direct recruitment in ONGC is as follows:

Group 'A' Officers:

(i) SC-15%, ST-7.5% & OBC-27% through open-competition on All India basis.

(ii) SC-16.66%, ST-7.5% and OBC-25.84% for recruitment other than open competition on All India basis.

Group B: It is promotional post in ONGC.

Group 'C' & 'D' post (staff):

Posts are reserved for SCs/STs/OBCs for recruitment as and when vacancies arise, as per GOI instructions applicable for different states.